DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 290 JC 890 015

AUTHOR Hendrick, Lawrence C.
TITLE A Program Review Model for Use at Sacramento City College: The Initial Concept Paper.
INSTITUTION Sacramento City Coll., Calif.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administration; Curriculum; *Educational Assessment; Employees; Institutional Environment; *Models; Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; Program Improvement; Technical Assistance; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

Though program evaluation has been an important focus of higher education for the last 20 years, traditional evaluation models have been ineffective for on-going programs, particularly those where the outcomes are multifaceted or undefined. Over the last five years, several alternative viewpoints on program evaluation have been suggested which could lead to the development of new models for program evaluation. One such model is built on the premise that college programs are open systems which are continually affected by and must react to both their internal and external environments. The objective of this type of evaluation is program improvement, rather than determination of whether the program should be maintained or discontinued. The process used is program based, long range, and institutionwide, and it remains distinct from the evaluation process used to inform administrative decisions. The model involves three phases, focusing on the history, current status, and future directions of the program. A series of qualitative and quantitative questions are posed to direct the attention of program staff to changes and trends, strengths and weaknesses, and the development of a plan for the future. Implementation of such an evaluation model requires clear lines of responsibility to organize the process and insure progress and continuity; a 3- or 4-year cycle of evaluating, reporting, recommending, implementing, and reevaluating all programs at the college; facilitation and monitoring by a non-partisan program evaluation committee; selection of an evaluation coordinator; involvement of the research office; and appointment of a facilitator for each program. Effective evaluation does not separate the program from its staff, but is built on their knowledge and experience. (AJL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED302290

A PROGRAM REVIEW MODEL FOR USE AT SACRAMENTO CITY COLLEGE:

The Initial Concept Paper

Lawrence C. Hendrick

Spring, 1984

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L.C. Hendrick

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

JC 890 015

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE INITIAL CONCEPT PAPER

SPRING, 1984

A PROGRAM REVIEW MODEL FOR USE AT SACRAMENTO CITY COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

Program evaluation* in the public sector has been accorded almost reverential status over the last twenty years. Prior to the seventies, particularly with the explosion of the Johnson era social programs, funding agencies and legislative bodies recognized that it was not enough to simply fund programs. Increasingly they required some form of evaluation to gauge the effect of the programs they funded.

Out of this requirement came many attempts to systematize performance evaluation. Most often the evaluations were based on some form of the standard three part formula: (1) decide what you are going to do and how you are going to do it; (2) do it; and, (3) show us how well your results match your proposal. This model was very neat and often worked for programs newly conceived and implemented in the "Great Society". The problems came, however, when the formula was applied to on-going programs, particularly those where the outcomes are less clear-cut or more multifaceted and the program staff have been with the program for some time. Much of education falls into this category. Consequently, this rather closed model has seldom worked in the evaluation of on-going educational programs.

Over the last five years, several alternative viewpoints on program evaluation have been suggested which could lead to the development of new models which are more successful in evaluating on-going educational programs. These alternative viewpoints can be identified by several ideas which they hold in common: (1) They usually urge less rigid dependence on quantitative measures; (2) They often suggest a more holistic approach to data gathering and interpretation; (3) A higher respect for the multi-dimensional human factor is apparent; and (4) some believe that the program's staff should become more actively involved in the actual evaluation. (Cronbach et al, 1980; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; House, 1980; Parker & Patterson, 1979; Willis, 1981)

PROGRAM EVALUATION INTENTS ARE OFTEN THE PROBLEM

Evaluation models are sometimes classified according to their anticipated outcomes. If the outcomes are designed to measure the success of the program and determine whether or not it should continue to be funded, the process is termed

* Note that the term "evaluation" is used throughout this paper. We have since adopted the term "review" as a better descriptor of our process.

"summative". If the intent of the evaluation process is to help the staff improve the program and its continuation is not in question, then the process is "formative" in nature.

An important phenomenon related to these two evaluation intents is their incompatibility, particularly in a higher education setting. One cannot conduct an evaluation designed to assess whether or not a program should continue (summative), and, at the same time, expect to receive much cooperation from program staff toward the program's improvement (formative). The mixing of these two intents has been the chief problem with many failed, yet well intentioned, educational program evaluation processes. When the processes are mixed it is at the expense of program improvement. In these times of economic stringency, however, it is necessary to have both of these outcomes from program evaluation. The bulk of the programs need to become more efficient and effective while the weak, anachronistic or expensive programs need to be examined for possible reduction or discontinuance.

The problem is to build two processes which are as exclusive of one another as possible in order that both intents can be served. The process which is designed to serve the purposes of program improvement needs to be constructed to serve the program first, and as a consequence, the institution. An evaluation process which is intended to serve decision-makers regarding the continued viability of a program must be designed to serve the institution first and secondly the program and its staff.The difference may seem subtle, but a formalized program improvement plan depends on a program-first orientation. Considerable contemporary organizational research supports this view. (Keller, 1983; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Maccoby, 1981) Each of these authors in a variety of ways, points to the inestimable value of developing management processes which effectively involve all employees in identifying personally with the improvement of the organization's work.

In any college or university, therefore, there should be two distinct evaluation processes. The process which is designed to serve the purpose of program improvement should be program-based, long-range and institution-wide involving all programs in a regular cycle. The process which is designed to determine actions regarding the reallocation of funds, reduction of programs or their elimination entirely should be administratively based, with short-term objectives and should not be college-wide but specific to those programs which meet a set of criteria that forces them into the arena of administrative scrutiny. This second process, the summative process, has received considerable attention, and a variety of processes are being used to react to the current financial exigencies. The remainder of this paper will be devoted to a description of a model designed for the exclusive purpose of improving programs, a formative process.

PRINCIPLES FOR AN IMPROVEMENT MODEL

This program improvement model has been built on several important principles developed from the alternative viewpoints noted earlier:

1. Professional educators are defined, in one sense, by their self-imposed obligation to evaluate and improve the quality of the programs in which they participate.

2. To be effective, a process of program evaluation and improvement must recognize and capitalize on this sense of professionalism by being program-based. In other words, the primary responsibility for evaluation and improvement of their program must be placed with the professional educators working in the program.

3. The institution's responsibility is to develop evaluation guidelines, and systematically organize and facilitate the process.

4. Effective, long-term program change is most often the result of professional self-evaluation.

5. A program evaluation and improvement model must insure that the totality of what affects a specific program is open for consideration.

The model which is described in the remainder of this paper is built on these principles.

A PROGRAM-BASED EVALUATION MODEL

One fault that is often apparent in program evaluation models is the closed system attitude of the conceptualizers (Parker, Peterson, 1979). A program of any sort does not exist in a vacuum; it must be viewed in the context of the many layers of the larger community outside as well as inside the institution. This model is built on the theoretical premise that college programs are open systems which are continually affected by and must react to both their internal and external environments. The description that follows often alludes to the need to consider environmental factors. In addition, the individual program evaluation process is given an institution-wide perspective in a total institutional program evaluation and improvement process. Description of the individual process is followed by the institution-wide scheme.

The Individual Program Process

A program evaluation will pass through three distinct phases before an individual evaluation/improvement cycle is complete.

Phase 1: This is the input phase. The program staff builds a base for the understanding of their current status by asking and answering the question, "Where have we been?"

Phase 2: This is the evaluation of the program's current status. The program staff asks and answers the question, "Where are we right now?"

Phase 3: This final phase looks forward and requires that the staff answer the question, "Where should/can we go from here?"

For each phase the program staff will decide what information will be necessary to fully answer the primary question. Although some information needs are obvious, other kinds will be suggested by the nature of a specific program. In the expansion which follows the more common kinds of questions which could be answered for each phase are suggested. The College should select a core set of questions which all programs answer and which can be augmented depending on specific program needs and characteristics.

Phase 1: "Where have we been?"

Quantitative Questions - In the last five years:

1. What curriculum changes have been made?

2. What have been the trends in

   a. work load/FTE
   b. budget?

3. What significant facility and equipment changes have occurred?

4. What have been the trends in

   a. student enrollment and retention? major? placements?
   b. number of program users? User interests and motivation? user persistence?

Qualitative Questions

1. What has the program been attempting to achieve during the last five years? (As these are the program's goals, those goals which have been both stated and unstated must be identified.)

2. What are the staff's perceptions of the success of the program and their individual contributions over the last five years?

3. What are the staff's perceptions of the past institutional support of the program?

4. What has been the effect of mandated controls and requirements by external licensing and accrediting agencies? (optional)

PHASE II - "Where are we right now?"

Quantitative Questions:

1. Describe the curriculum offerings, their relationship to your discipline and the students you serve.

2. Describe the program/service, its relationship to student services and to the students you serve.

3. Are there current articulation agreements? List the schools and articulated courses.

4. What is the current faculty/student ratio for the 4th week?

Qualitative Questions:

1. What is the current evaluation and/or rationale of the status of:

   a. workload/FTE?
   b. budget to the program's goals?
   c. enrollment and retention? majors? placements?
   d. number of program users? user interests and motivations? user persistence?

2. Do the current program goals differ from those outlined in Phase 1? If so, how?

3. How are these goals compatible and supportive of the institution's goals?

4. What are the perceptions by the staff of the current health of the program?

5. What are the staff's attitudes towards their program?

6. What, if appropriate, are employer attitudes towards the program? advisory committee opinions?

7. What opinions are held of the program by such external agencies or groups as:

   a. high schools?
   b. transfer institutions?
   c. the professional or practicing community (e.g. nurses)?
   d. recipients of program services (e.g. audiences, counselees)?

8. What are the opinions of students regarding the programs quality?

9. What are the attitudes and perceptions of the program by all administrators?

10. What attitudes do counselors have towards the program?

Phase III - "Where should/can we go from here"?

Questions to answer:

1. How will the trends outlined in Phase II affect the program?

2. Do any of the opinions and attitudes of the constituencies noted in Phase II suggest changes which might benefit the program?

3. Is the program likely to benefit or suffer from expected trends in:

   a. population?
   b. employment?
   c. technology?

4. What institutional goals are related to the program?

5. What should the goals of the program be for the next three to four years?

6. What action recommendations can be made for the next year or two which will begin to move the program toward its goals?

The Institutional Scheme

A successful program evaluation scheme must be conceived as an institution-wide process. Clear lines of responsibility should be established to organize the process and insure progress and continuity. An effective evaluation program should also be conceptualized as a cyclic process: Evaluate, report and

recommend, implement, evaluate... (an evaluation process is incomplete unless the institution is prepared to respond to the findings during a recommendation and implementation phase). This scheme represents a mutual commitment to program and institutional excellence and the necessary and reasonable actions required to approach this goal.

The individual program process outlined above is adaptable to both academic and student service programs. Participating programs should be chosen either by random selection, self-selection or both, (an opportunity to volunteer with non-volunteers put on a random cycle).

A program should be loosely defined to allow for the examination of any acceptable aggregation of people who perform essentially the same service, are in the same academic discipline or offer the same or similar occupational training. It is best to allow for self-identification of acceptable units and not get bogged down in attempting to find a definition of a program with which everyone feels comfortable. The goal is evaluation. If a group thinks they're a program then they should go through the process and prove it.

The process can be conducted on a three or four year cycle:

Year one	-	Evaluation Phases I and II
Year two	-	Evaluation Phase III and commendations for excellence
Year three and four	-	Implementation of recommendations

Whereas the actual evaluation is program-based and conducted primarily by the program staff, the staff will require technical help. It is here that the institutional obligation to facilitate the evaluation is important. It is helpful to think of the process in terms of three separate functional areas: 1) the line relationship within which the program functions: 2) An information function through which the necessary evaluation information is provided: 3) A facilitation and monitoring function by which the actual evaluation occurs.

It is through the line function that compliance with the charge to evaluate is assured. Each program should also select a program staff member as an "Evaluation Coordinator" to manage the administrative functions of the process with the facilitator.

The tools required to conduct the research and gather the information should be provided by the institutional research office. The institutional research officer will need to be capable of providing information readily attainable through institutional data sources or the management information system. In addition, survey techniques will have to be devised to collect the qualitative data important to the comprehensiveness of the evaluation.

Finally, a facilitation and monitoring function should be provided. This function represents a key element in the program-based concept. A non-partisan body - A Program Evaluation Committee perhaps should be established to conduct this dual function.

To help the staff members conduct their evaluation, a facilitator should be appointed for every program. The facilitators should be specially skilled staff from other areas (preferably faculty) who operate as listeners, questioners, guides, prods and affirmers of the program staff as they work through their evaluation. A facilitator should be a good listener who can help others clarify what they wish to do and suggest means to help them accomplish their goals. Above all, the facilitator keeps the staff moving forward.

The Committee should be responsible for the selection and training of these facilitators. A likely means to accomplish this would be through an alliance with the college's staff development function. One facilitator could probably facilitate the evaluation process of several programs at one time.

The Committee should also monitor the process and keep the line administrators informed of the progress of the individual evaluations. Part of this monitoring function should be to review each final evaluation report including the conclusions and recommendations. The Committee's charge should be to review the report only to verify that the program has completed the full process. Approval or disapproval of the conclusions and/or action on the recommendations belongs to the line administrators and the appropriate college committees. The flow-chart (Chart 1) expresses in graphic form these relationships to the individual program.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

When program evaluation is viewed in the positive light of self-improvement as well as program improvement, new energy can be generated. An attitude which accepts that a program cannot be separated from its staff and that a comprehensive evaluation of a program's success is best built on their knowledge and experience is consistent with much current thought on both effective management and evaluation.

The spectre of the potentially punitive outside evaluator descending with an abacus to count students and costs and use the ciphers as the only evaluative measures of human endeavor can freeze into a state of inertia even the most dedicated teacher or counselor. If we expect to improve what we do in education we can only rely on the dedication of those who do it. Make the program staff responsible, reward their efforts and they will be responsible. Their programs will prove it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cranton, P.H. and Legge, L.H. "Program Evaluation in Higher Education." Journal of Higher Education, 49:5 (1978), 464-471

Cronbach, L.J., et. al. Toward Reform of Program Evaluation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.

Eisner, Elliot. "Toward a Conceptual Revolution in Evaluation." The Educational Forum, 44:3 (1980), 373-374.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. Effective Evaluation. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass, 1981.

House, E.R. Evaluating with Validity. Beverly Hills; Sage, 1980.

Keller, George. Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education. New York; Johns Hopkins Press, 1983.

Kuh, George D. and Ransdell, Gary A. "Evaluation by Discussion: An Education Design for Postsecondary Programs, "Journal of Higher Education, 51:3 (1980), 301-313.

Maccoby, Michael. The Leader. New York; Simon and Schuster, 1981.

Nevo, David. "The Conceptualization of Educational Evaluation: An Analytical Review of the Literature." Review of Education Research, 53:1 (1983), 117-128.

Parker, Jackson and Patterson, Jerry L. "Toward An Ecological Evaluation Model." The Educational Forum, (1979), 351-362.

Patton, Michael Q. Practical Evaluation. Beverly Hills; Sage, 1982.

Peters, Thomas J. and Waterman, Robert H. In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies. New York; Harper and Row, 1982.

Willis, George. "Democratization of Curriculum Evaluation." Educational Leadership, (May, 1981), 630-632.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges FEB 10 1989